

BACKGROUND

Thale Ban, located in Amphur Kuan Done and Amphur Muang, Satun Province, was designated the 20th national park of Thailand on October 27, 1980, and covers an area of 196 sq.km. (122,500 Rai). Thale Ban Marine National Park is named after its fresh water lake, which is an important site within the forests of this region. Geologists believe that it was formed when land subsided into underground caves. It is presumed that the name 'Thale Ban' derives from the Malay word 'ler-oat-ka-ban' meaning 'subsided land'. Jiin Mountain is the park's highest, rising to a height of 756 m.

Although Thale Ban is a marine national park, most of the area is actually a complex of mountains supporting evergreen forest, mixed deciduous forest (rarely found in southern Thailand), and mangrove forest. These habitats host a veritable array of flora and fauna, many of which are rare and endemic, such as the Barking Tree Frog (*Rana glandulosa*). Other tourist attractions include waterfalls, grasslands, and caves.



TRAVEL INFORMATION



It is 973 km. from Bangkok to Satun. From Satun, take Highway No.406 for about 19 km. and turn right onto Route 4184 for another 20 km. before reaching Thale Ban's headquarters.

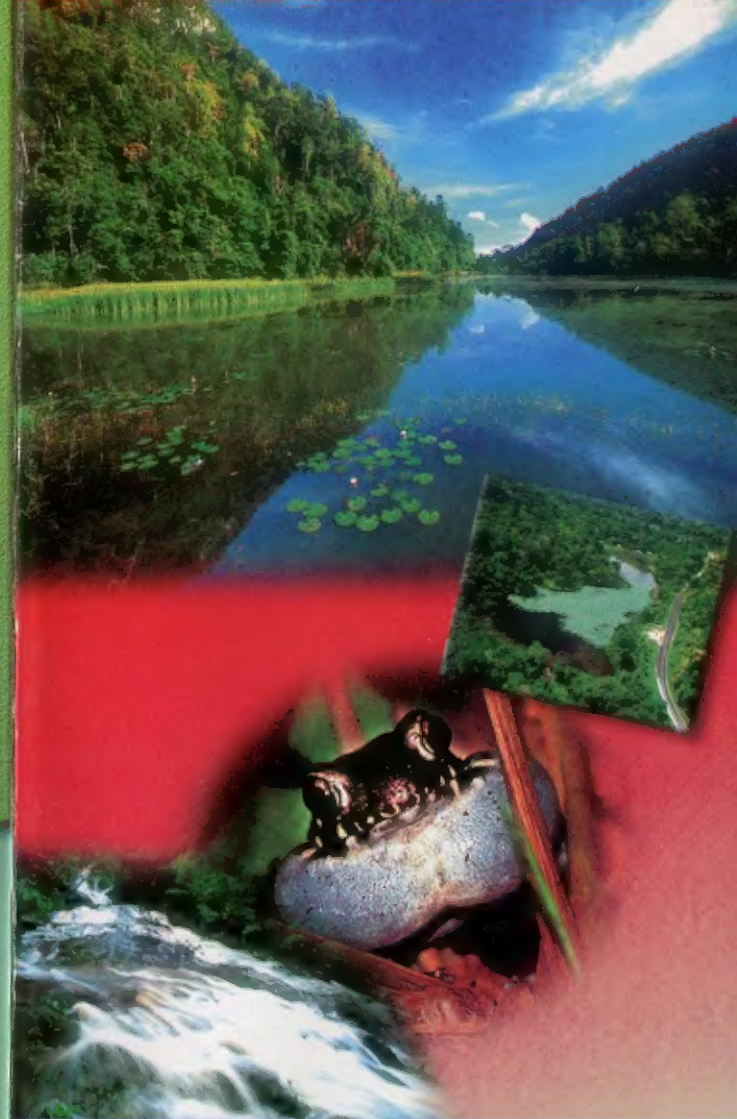
ACCOMMODATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

Thale Ban has bungalows, campsites and other facilities reserved by contacting either Thale Ban's Visitor Centre, Tel. 0-7472-9202-3, or the Marine National Park Division of the Royal Forest Department in Bangkok, Tel. 0-2561-2918, 0-2561-2921, 0-2561-4292-4 ext. 746

NOTE: Book one month in advance.

THALE BAN

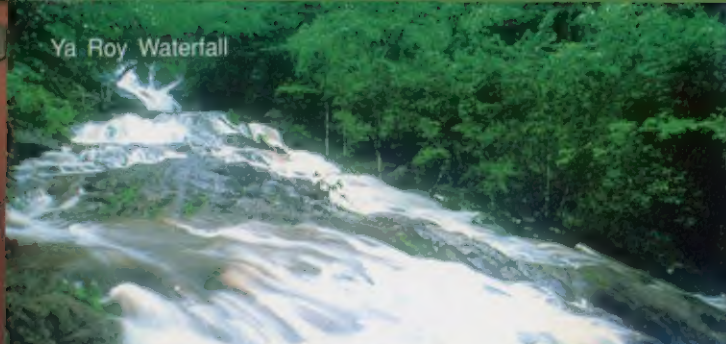
MARINE NATIONAL PARK



MARINE NATIONAL PARK
DIVISION,
ROYAL FOREST DEPARTMENT



Ya Roy Waterfall



Mangrove Forest



Wang Pra Grassland



MAIN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND INTERESTING ACTIVITIES

Thale Ban Lake, a huge freshwater lake of about 125 Rai, which has many species of fish and animals. It is habitat of the Barking Tree Frog and the 'Ba-gong', a rare species of water plant. Boardwalks and pavilions are available for one to fully absorb the atmosphere and to admire the characteristics of the lake.

The trail to **Ya Roi Waterfall** is located, on the left, about 6 km. before reaching the HQ. Follow this trail for about 700 m. The waterfall has 9 tiers, the forth being the highest, and the ninth the most beautiful.

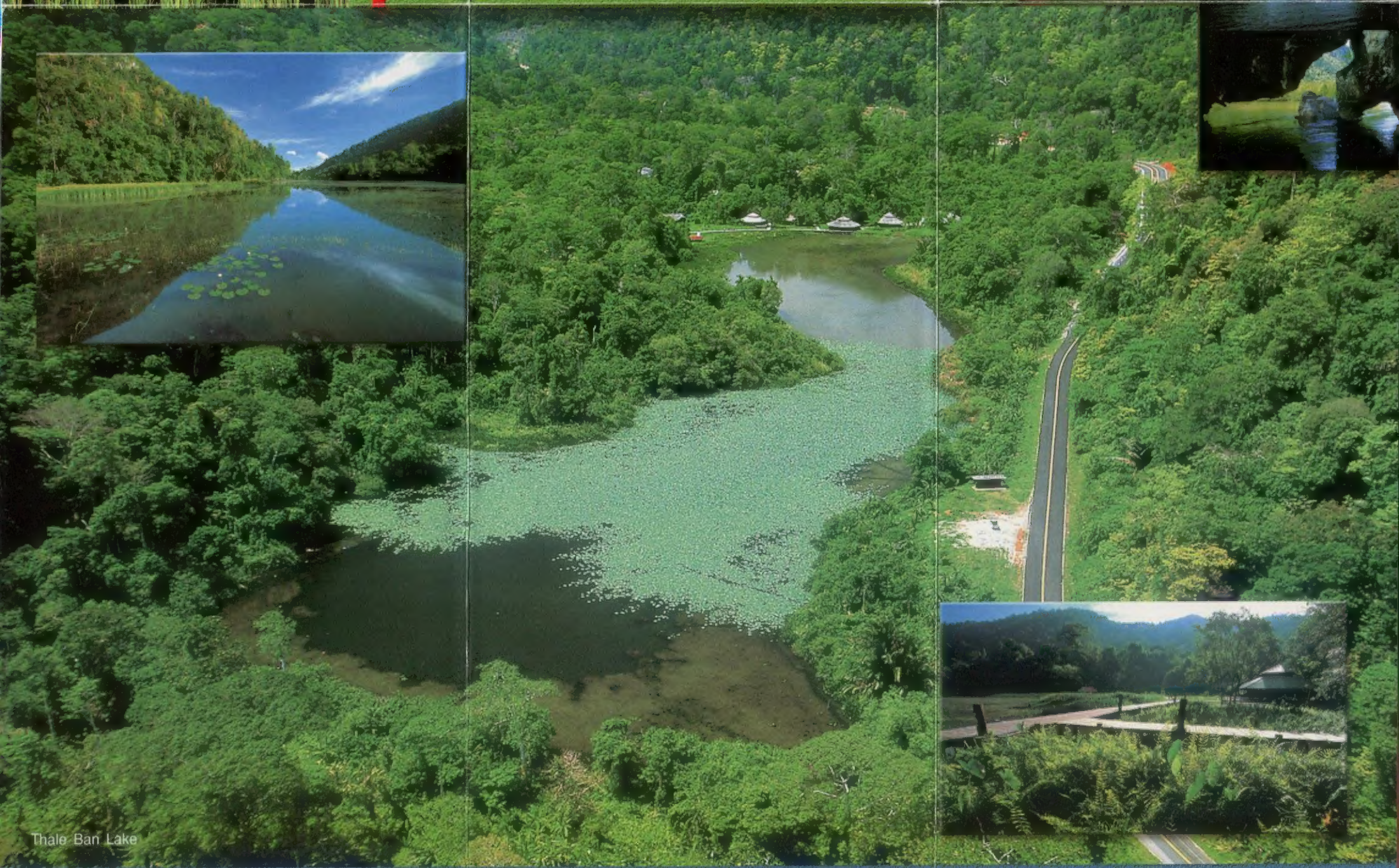
Wang Pra Grassland can be reached by turning right for about 10 km. along the dirt road 8 km. before the HQ. It is a large grassland located in the western valley of the park. You may, with luck, see porcupines, mouse deer, or even junglefowls foraging here. Contact a park officer to guide you.

Poo Yoo Cave. From Satun, take Route 4183 to Tam Malang Pier, about 9 km., and hire a boat from the pier. The boat trip takes about 45 minutes. On the way you will pass abundant mangrove forest alternating with impressive limestone mountains. The cave can only be navigated at low tide, so in effect, the mountain, surrounded by luscious mangrove, blocks the river.

Nature Trails. An attraction of Thale Ban is that all the trails, not only the designated 'nature trail' at the HQ, are very amenable to the study of nature. Yet something as simple as sitting in the lakeside pavilions and listening to the barking of tree frogs, will undoubtedly move people to appreciate nature further.



Poo Yoo Cave



Thale Ban Lake



THALE BAN MARINE NATIONAL PARK

MARINE NATIONAL PARK DIVISION, ROYAL FOREST DEPARTMENT



GEOGRAPHY AND ECOLOGY

Since the physical topography of the area is highly varied, with vast lakes, waterfalls, streams, mountains, caves, rich forests, and large mangrove forests, Thale Ban has a rich bio-diversity. Although poaching and illegal cultivation, past to the present, has regrettably destroyed much, what remains is invaluable and we must not allow anybody to take further advantage or damage it again.



Wreathed Hornbill



Wang Pra Grassland and Mixed Deciduous Forest



Mangrove Forest

FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE PARK

Dense **Evergreen Forest** covers most of the area, and has an enormous range of plants. It is home to many species of wildlife ranging from large mammals such as Tiger, Malayan Sun Bear, and Wild Boar, to Dusky Langur and many others, including top priority protected species such as Malayan Tapir, Serow, and Marbled Cat.

Mixed Deciduous Forest is found in the centre of the park near Wang Pra Grassland. This type of forest is rarely found in southern Thailand.

Mangrove Forest covers the southwestern shoreline of the park. It is a nursery for marine life, as well as the living and feeding grounds for many other species of animals.

In Thale Ban Marine National Park, there are more than 400 species of terrestrial wildlife recorded with over 60 species of mammals, more than 280 of birds, over 40 of reptiles, and more than 20 of amphibians, as well as hundreds species of marine animals.



Barking Tree Frog

RULES AND REGULATIONS

When taking a trip to a national park, there are rules and regulations that every conscientious tourist must observe in order to maintain this public area sustainably forever. They are

- Do not collect anything but rubbish.
- Do not make loud noises, which disturbs other people and wildlife.
- Do not hunt, destroy, or do anything that harms plants, animals, and the environment.
- Do realize the significance of nature, in that everybody must share and learn to preserve it for ourselves and others.



Evergreen Forest



Ba-gong

Thaleban National Park

The first thing visitors see of Thaleban National Park is the valley with limestone cliffs and lake, in which the headquarters is located, interestingly the lake is probably responsible for the park's name. This region has been influenced by Malay culture for centuries and Thaleban is thought to be derived from the Malay words "Leur aud ga ban" which describes a lowlying area of marshland. A local Folkstory tells how the area was once a fertile valley, but about 300 years ago an earthquake occurred, the ground shook and trembled for many days causing a landslide to block the mouth of the valley, this eventually filled with water to produce the lake seen today. It is possible that an earthquake did occur as the remains of many large trees have been recovered from the bottom of the lake, indicating that the area was once forested.

On October 27th 1980 Thaleban National Park was officially opened by royal decree. The park is located in Khuan Don and Muang districts, of Satun province. This province is located on the Andaman side of the Thai peninsula, and is over 1000kms south of Bangkok. The southern edge of the park adjoins the Malaysian border. The total area of the park is 196 km², with the highest point being the summit of Khao Chin mountain at 756m.

Geology

Geologically the valley in which the headquarters is situated marks a line of unconformity. The massive limestone units on the western side overlay younger intrusive igneous rocks, which form Khao Chin mountain. This geologic difference is reflected in the occurrence of caves and waterfalls in the park. The caves are restricted to the limestone, while waterfalls occur on the impervious granite rock. This geologic distribution greatly influences other landforms and the forest types occurring. The limestone is pervious to water, produces shallow soils, with many exposed cliffs and steep sided mountains. The western half is dominated by typical granitic scenery, with rounded hills, deep soils, few natural outcrops and many waterfalls and streams.

Flora and Fauna

Thaleban has three distinct habitat types these are;

1. **Tropical evergreen forest**, This forest type occurs over the granitic rocks in the northeastern part of the park and as gallery forests along the waterways in the drier limestone areas of the park. This forest type is very diverse with greater than 200 species of tree per kilometer square. Some of the tree species recorded present include; *Shorea curtisii*, *Hopea odorata*, *Parashorea stellata*, *Fagraea fragrans*, *Cinnamomum porrectum*, *Artocarpus rigidus*, *Dipterocarpus* sp., Rattans, Lianes and Orchids. This forest in places has a highly specialised canopy structure often with several layers and the tallest trees reaching over 60 meters.

2. **Mixed deciduous forest**, This forest type is easily distinguished from the evergreen forest in the dry season by the numerous deciduous trees in the canopy. This forest is not as dense or diverse, and rarely exceeds 50m in height. Important species recorded include; several *Eugenia* sp., *Shorea farinosa*, *Careya arborea*, *Lagerstroemia cuspidata*, *Crudia gracilis*, *Dillenia ovata*, *Sterospermum neuranthum* and several bamboo species.

3. **Mangrove forest**, Thaleban has a small area of mangrove forest in the southwestern corner where the park reaches the Andaman sea. By comparison to the previous forest types the species mix is relatively poor, but mangroves act as an important refuge and nursery site for many species. The forest is dominated by two genus; *Rhizophoraceae* and *Bruguiera*. Visitors who are interested in nature are recommended to take a boat trip through the mangroves, many strange sights are sure to be encountered.

Fauna, The rich forest present supports a wide range of medium and small sized wildlife including, Tapir, Serow, Wild pig, Barking deer, Macaques, Langurs, Gibbons, Fishing cats, several civet and squirrel species. Currently the park has a recorded birdlist of 289 species. In March and November each year a migration of Raptor species is visible from the park, with greater than 1,000 birds seen each day for almost a week.



Tourism points

Thaleban lake, covers an area of approximately 200 Rhi (50 ha) and is the home of many waterbirds and fish, including giant catfish. The rare frog (*Rana glandulosa*) can be heard calling from the vegetation surrounding the lake every evening.

Yaroy waterfall, This waterfall with a series of five falls is located 6km north of headquarters. It is signposted from the road and are reached along a track after about 700m. The bottom pools can be busy, the topmost fall is the best for swimming. A unit of the park protection force resides here.

Don Bliew waterfall, The most beautiful waterfall in the park with a good year round water supply. The falls are 10 km north of headquarters, signposted from the road a track leads a further 3km to the waterfalls. These falls are much quieter and usually a secluded pool can be found even on a busy day.

Caves, Thaleban has many caves and the best is also the easiest to reach being 2km north of the park. **Don Din cave** was a refuge for resistance fighters during World War II and contains a large cavern with many cave features. A visit at dusk is recommended as this is the time when the resident bats depart enmasse.

Tham Lot Poo You cave situated in the mangroves on the south western side of the park is a tunnel cave which is very picturesque, at low tide boats can pass through the cave. The cave is reached by hiring a boat from Tammalang pier which is 9km south of Satun town. This trip can be combined with an exploratory trip of the mangroves.

Wangprah meadows, An extensive area due west of the headquarters. This is a large area of redundant rice fields which are slowly reforesting. This area is rich in birds and flowers and Argus pheasant, Jungle fowl, Mouse deer, Porcupine and Asian golden cats are occasionally seen. This is a good place for trekking and camping out.

Accommodation

The park has 9 bungalows which can be rented, these range in price from 500 to 700B and can cater for 6 to 12 people. Camping is allowed and there are public toilets. Food and drinks can be purchased at the Restaurant. Electricity is available 24 hours a day. Water in the bathrooms is from the small waterfall near headquarters, thus after heavy rain it can be brown due to increased sediment load.

Accommodation should be booked in advance either at **Thaleban National park**, Khuan Don District, Satun Province 91160 or at the **Reservations office**, National Park Division, Royal Forest Department, Chatuchak, Bangkok, 10900. Tel (02) 5790529, 5794842, 5795269. If booking in Bangkok be sure to retain your booking receipt for presentation upon arrival at the park.

Travel Information

The park headquarters are located off the main Satun to Hat Yai road (406), on the 4184 border road to Wangkelian, Malaysia. Buses from Satun or Hat Yai will stop at the junction, Khuan Sataw, where a motorcycle taxi can be hired to the park. There is also an hourly pickup/taxi (orange) which leaves Satun market each hour from 8am to 4pm which can drop people off at the park gates.

General Information

According to the National Parks Act of 1961, the following activities are permitted; swimming, diving, sports, picnicing and camping. Tents are permitted provided you set them up yourself. Leave anything valuable at the office if you plan to be away from your site for many hours. Please heed any warnings or advice that park staff may have. Be sure to notify park staff if you make a fire, and do not take any branches from trees, use only wood off the ground and be sure to extinguish your fire with water or sand before leaving the site. **Respect the local culture and religion; nude or topless sunbathing is forbidden.** Do not disturb other guests or wildlife. Stay on established trails, if you want a guide ask one of the rangers in the visitors centre.

Finally, if you enjoyed your stay in the National Park or if you have any comments about service etc, please be sure to write to the Director at the above address. Without feedback from visitors the service will not be improved. Thank you for visiting!

Map of Thaleban National Park.

